

## Taken Back By You by fearofsilence

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**Summary:**

“I wasn’t taking pictures of Nancy,” he repeats, slowly, wishing he could pull every word back out of the night air and swallow them. But there they are, out there, and he’s not sure if they’re building up that old wall between Steve and him – or tearing it down. “That night. I was... It wasn’t Nancy.”

# Taken Back By You

## Author's Note:

[It's Stonathan Week!](#)

Day 1: Raise Your Glasses!

I felt compelled to contribute. This is by no means my first foray into fanfiction. It's just the first time I've decided to post my work publicly since I was like 13. (wow, this is nervewracking.) This first part only kind of fits the prompt, as it's set during a graduation party. It's a flashback in a future fic that I'm working on, so if you're interested in reading more, I'd love to know. (:

Title from song of the same name by New Found Glory.

Obviously, I own nothing.

Jonathan doesn't get drunk very often. In fact, he's never really gotten drunk. Too many times he's watched his father have drink after drink and seen his anger burst out of him like projectile vomit. He's seen that anger directed at his mother, at Will before he or Joyce could step in and take the brunt. He's been the target of that anger.

He's terrified of becoming Lonnie. And one way he can avoid that is by avoiding alcohol altogether.

Tonight, however, he's let his guard down. He's let Nancy coerce him into a few drinks to celebrate their graduation. "Loosen up, Jonathan," she'd said, shoving a cup of an ambiguous purple liquid at his chest. "High school is over!"

Now he's drunk. Not just playful, *ha-ha*, don't-I-look-so-happy drunk. Reckless behavior, I'm-a-high-school-graduate-and-I'm-invincible drunk.

He's sitting on a cement stoop in what he thinks is Jenny Thompson's backyard, still soaking wet after he and ten other people jumped into

the pool in their clothes. No one's given him a hard time. No one's looked at him like he doesn't belong there. No one's treated him like an outsider the way they did all throughout high school.

It's weird.

He's dug his camera out of Nancy's purse. He brought it with the idea he might take a few pictures and get the fuck out. He didn't really think this party would be worth commemorating. Funny thing is, he hasn't used his camera once since they got here; he's actually been having what Nancy called 'a good time' – something he once thought impossible with these particular people.

It's dark now, and he's alone. Or, at least, he is until someone stumbles out of the sliding glass door and plops down beside him.

Steve.

They've gotten to know each other a bit better after... everything. How could they not? Still, Jonathan hesitates to call them *friends*. Things got awkward after Nancy dumped him. Especially when Steve assumed she dumped him for Jonathan.

She didn't. They tried it, for awhile, before they both realized they were better off as friends.

Steve knows that now. The three of them can hang out without all the excess tension, a year after the fact. But it's not perfect and conversation still gets stilted and awkward from time to time.

Except when it's just them. Just Jonathan and Steve, alone.

Then it's almost like they *are* friends. With no Nancy in the middle to remind them of how much they used to hate each other.

Steve gives Jonathan a slurred greeting and then reaches for the camera. Jonathan nearly remembers to hold his breath like he does whenever anyone but him touches his most prized possession. But – somehow, drunk as he is, as they both are – he trusts Steve not to break it again. At least not on purpose.

He chuckles to himself, cradling the camera in his hands and gazing

down at it reverently. "I can't believe you started out taking creepshots of Nancy through my bedroom window."

Jonathan winces.

"I-"

"And now you're off to New York to become a famous photographer." Then, quieter, "Leave me all alone here in Bumfuck, Indiana."

The look on his face is hard to read, but he thinks Steve might be genuinely sad. And that's... that's strange. Not bad strange, just *strange*. It leaves a slightly unsettled feeling in his gut, mixed with all the vodka and whatever else.

It's easy enough to blame the warmth in his cheeks on the alcohol.

Steve hands the camera back and continues, oblivious; it's dark anyway. "I can't help but feel like I deserve a little credit."

He doesn't have to mention why. Jonathan had only believed his replacement camera was from Nancy about until he'd torn open the pristine wrapping paper.

Jonathan looks down at the camera in his hands. Although he would've preferred his first Pentax never meet the cold asphalt of the Hawkins High School parking lot, he thinks this second one is the most thoughtful gift anyone has given him. Without it, he'd be nothing. He definitely wouldn't be going to NYU in the fall.

He's suddenly overcome with gratitude – and probably a bit of drunken brazenness. When he lifts his head, it hardly registers how close they're sitting until he's already blurted, "It wasn't Nancy."

"What?" Steve turns to him, head tilted. He's close enough that Jonathan can smell his cologne and the booze on his breath.

"I wasn't taking pictures of Nancy," he repeats, slowly, wishing he could pull every word back out of the night air and swallow them. But there they are, out there, and he's not sure if they're building up that old wall between Steve and him – or tearing it down. "That night. I was... It wasn't Nancy."

He expects Steve to move back. To stand up, disgusted; to walk away.

But he doesn't. He just continues staring at Jonathan, wide-eyed, too close for either of their comfort.

"Oh," Steve breathes. Jonathan feels it ghost along his cheek, warm and slightly rancid. If it isn't just his imagination, Steve is at least a half inch closer than he'd been a second ago. But it's dark, and he's drunk, and there's no way Steve is moving closer. Absolutely no way-

The slide of the door interrupts them, filling the quiet night with boisterous laughter and some unbearable pop song. Jonathan is the first to jerk away, and he nearly drops his camera in the process.

When he collects himself, Steve is already gone and Jonathan's left alone again, wondering what just happened. He's not sure if Steve was really about to kiss him or if he'd just hallucinated that bit. Alcohol can make you hallucinate, right?

He is sure about one thing, however. If he had been – about to kiss him, that is – Jonathan would've let him.

After all is said and done, he only ends up with one picture from that night. It's of Steve, alone, framed by a blur of drunken partygoers. There's a drink in his hand and a smile on his face but his eyes are far away. Jonathan doesn't get a chance to develop the photograph until he's at NYU. He pins it to the wall by his bed.

### **Author's Note:**

I hope to be able to write something for each day,  
but if not, uhhh. sorry?